



State of Wisconsin  
Governor Scott Walker

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**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**

Ben Brancel, Secretary

**DATE:** November 30, 2015

**TO:** Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

**FROM:** Ben Brancel, Secretary  
John Petty, Administrator, Division of Agricultural Resource Management

**SUBJECT:** Farmland Preservation Program Biennial Report

**PRESENTED BY:** Alison Volk & Katy Vosburg, Farmland Preservation Program

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This farmland preservation (FPP) report is required every two years based on s. 91.04, Wis. Stats. The report is made in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) and copies of the report are to be sent to DOR and to the Department of Administration. DOR has provided information for the report related to farmland preservation tax credits paid under Chapter 71, Stats. It is being presented to the Board for informational purposes only. No Board action is required. This is the third report since the farmland preservation law changed in July 2009.

**SUMMARY / BACKGROUND:**

Over the past two years, the department has continued implementing the 2009 changes to the statutes. Major efforts have been ongoing in all aspects of the program. This report covers the department's efforts to implement the farmland preservation program, including: agricultural enterprise areas; farmland preservation agreements, planning, and zoning. The report also contains information on farmland availability, trends in farmland use, program participation by local governments and landowners, farmland preservation tax credits, adherence to soil and water conservation practice requirements, program costs and trends, and recommendations and issues identified by the department.

There are several key items to report:

- In 2014 the average price per acre of farmland sold for continuing agricultural use in Wisconsin rose 12.9% from 2013 to \$5,407. Meanwhile the price of farmland sold and diverted to non-agricultural use decreased by 11.9% to \$5,846 between 2013 and 2014.
- At the conclusion of the 2013-2015 biennium, the department had certified 39 updated county farmland preservation plans and 170 farmland preservation ordinances covering roughly 400 towns, cities and villages across the state.
- Since 2009, 31 Agricultural Enterprise Areas have been designated by the department and cover roughly 1 million acres in portions of 23 counties and 92 towns
  - Since July 2009, nearly 500 Farmland Preservation Agreements have been signed covering over 100,000 acres of land within designated AEAs.
- The number of landowners participating under tax schedule FC-A increased between 2013 and 2014. In 2013, 11,470 claims on 2.15 million acres were filed under the new program for \$16.5 million. In 2014, 11,542 claims were filed on 2.18 million acres for \$16.8 million.
- Staff reviewed conservation compliance activities for all counties participating in the farmland preservation program (70). During the biennium 630 notices of noncompliance were issued around the state, a slight decrease from the previous biennium.

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